

those persons that have brought vision, creativity, and energy to the promotion and advancement of the packaging industry. Tom Landaal was an advocate for improved technology and safe working conditions. This recognition by his peers is a fitting tribute to his enthusiasm for designing the best system to deliver the best product to his customers and to ensure the packaging industry remained on the cutting edge for fulfilling customer needs. I congratulate the International Corrugated Packaging Foundation for their selection of Thomas Landaal for this honor and hope his example will inspire the next generation to continue his work. I ask the House of Representatives to rise with me today and applaud the life and work of my good friend, Thomas Landaal.

YEAR OF THE OX

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 2009

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, I rise today to extend my best wishes to the millions of Asian Americans who are celebrating the Lunar New Year, which ushers in the Year of the Ox. Representing one of the largest Asian American populations in Southern California, I have had the distinct privilege in joining many of my Asian American constituents to commemorate this historic tradition.

The communities of Alhambra, San Gabriel, and Monterey Park have organized events and festivities for families to gather and celebrate the Year of the Ox. I am also delighted that this will be the 110th year that the Annual Golden Dragon Lunar New Year Parade, hosted by the Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Los Angeles, will be bringing floats, marching bands, and various forms of entertainment to over 100,000 people. From parades to festivals, all will be able to enjoy the colorful, rich traditions that have been observed by many Asian cultures for centuries.

I wish you all the best in the Year of the Ox.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE IMPROVED BURN INJURY TREATMENT ACCESS ACT OF 2009

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 2009

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Social Security and Medicare Improved Burn Injury Treatment Access Act of 2009. This legislation provides a waiver of the 24-month waiting period now required before an uninsured individual becomes eligible for Medicare coverage for disabling burn injuries, as well as the five-month waiting period for Social Security disability benefits.

Each year an estimated 500,000 people are treated for burn injuries. Of these 500,000 injuries, about 40,000 require hospitalization. Fire and burn deaths average about 4,000 per year.

Burn care is highly specialized. While there are thousands of trauma centers in the United

States, there are only 125 burn centers with a total burn-bed capacity of just over 1,800. These specialized burn centers treat about 25,000 patients annually, or on average, 200 admissions per year for each center. U.S. hospitals without burn centers treat the remaining patients and average less than three burn admissions per year.

Medical care for serious burn injuries is very expensive, which places a great financial strain on burn centers, about 40 percent of whose patients are uninsured. Because of these financial challenges, burn centers in Pennsylvania, Mississippi, Iowa and South Carolina have closed in just the past two years.

This is occurring at a time when the Federal Government is asking burn centers to expand their capacity to deal with mass casualty scenarios. The Departments of Health and Human Services and Homeland Security have included burn centers in the Critical Benchmark Surge Capacity Criteria in the funding continuation requirements for State plans administered through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). HSS, in conjunction with the American Burn Association, has created a real-time, web-based burn bed capacity system in the national emergency preparedness center and funded Advanced Burn Life Support (ABLS) and clinical, on-site burn nurse training for 200 public health service nurses as a reserve capacity for potential mass burn casualty incidents, as well as supporting more than 20 ABLS courses with over 600 first-responders in 10 key areas of the country.

The 9/11 terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, DC, and major accidents like the Rhode Island nightclub fire and North Carolina chemical plant explosions demonstrate the substantial number of burn injuries that can result from such events. Over one-third of those hospitalized in New York on 9/11 had severe burn injuries. The Department of Homeland Security has recognized that there would be mass burn casualties in terrorist acts, and there is a need for appropriate preparedness activities. For example, if the United States should suffer further terrorist attacks using explosions, incendiary devices or chemical weapons, most victims would suffer severe burn injuries.

Even a relatively modest number of burn injuries can consume large segments of the Nation's burn bed capacity. For example, the victims of the Rhode Island nightclub fire absorbed the burn bed capacity of most of the northern East Coast of the United States. Mass burn casualties that reach into the hundreds or thousands would strain the system to the breaking point.

It is clear that burn centers are a national resource and a critical link to public health emergency preparedness. Medicare coverage for serious, disabling burn injuries would enable these burn centers to remain financially viable and preserve an essential component of our public health emergency infrastructure.

This legislation follows an approach already taken with respect to End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease), both of which result in waivers of the 24-month waiting period for Medicare eligibility. While these 2 diseases tend to be progressive in nature, the very initial phase of a serious burn injury is when things are most acute.

This legislation is similar to H.R. 685, which I introduced in the 110th Congress, except for the inclusion of some important cost containment provisions. No one with either public or private insurance at the time of their burn injury will be eligible for the 24-month waiver. Nor will State public insurance programs be permitted to restrict coverage for burn patients so as to place the burden solely on Medicare. The legislation also requires that the individual's disability status be reevaluated at least once every 3 years to ensure that those patients who have fully recovered from their burn injuries will not be able to stay on Medicare indefinitely.

Providing immediate Medicare coverage for uninsured patients suffering serious, disabling burn injuries is fully justified and a necessary step. Although not all hospitalized burn injuries would qualify as "disabling" and thus result in immediate Medicare coverage, this legislation is about providing coverage for the many uninsured patients suffering from serious burn injuries and ensuring the survival of a vital national resource that already is in jeopardy, a situation we cannot accept as we seek to prepare the nation to deal with potential mass casualty terrorist events.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RANDY NEUGEBAUER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 2009

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Madam Speaker, due to a death in the family I was absent for the following rollcall votes held January 21 and January 22, 2009. Had I been present, I would have voted as indicated for each roll call listed: rollcall vote 23: "yea"; rollcall vote 24: "nay"; rollcall vote 25: "yea"; rollcall vote 26: "nay"; rollcall vote 27: "yea"; rollcall vote 28: "yea"; rollcall vote 29: "yea."

IN MEMORY OF AUSTIN CUNNINGHAM

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 2009

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, on January 26th, a long-time friend and favorite son of South Carolina, Austin Cunningham, passed away. In his lifetime—that spanned almost an entire century—Mr. Cunningham was a successful businessman, a tireless leader in the community, a prolific philosopher, and a mentor. He was a valued advisor to the late Congressman Floyd Spence and Governor Carol Campbell leading the efforts to reduce capital gains taxes. His steadfast belief in the importance and virtue of service was an inspiration to many, and he left a positive and indelible mark on South Carolina and the Nation.

Staff writer Lee Tant of the Times and Democrat of Orangeburg, South Carolina has thoughtfully developed the following fitting tribute to Mr. Cunningham.